

Town of Chester
203 Middlesex Avenue
Chester, CT 06412



telephone: 860-526-0013
facsimile: 860-526-0004
www.chesterct.org

BILL: HB 5526

TITLE: AN ACT CONCERNING IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

POSITION: Support with suggested improvements

HB 5526 delays the implementation of in-school suspension until on or after July 1, 2012. While I support this proposition, as it will provide additional time for school administrations to thoughtfully plan implementation, and town administrators to better prepare for the added financial burden this initiative places on taxpayers, I do not believe it goes to the heart of the matter.

The intention of this legislation is meritorious, however, locally elected boards of education should maintain the right to set the policy deemed most appropriate for their community.

As is commonly understood the 169 towns that make up Connecticut are unique in countless ways. The impact of legislation such as this will have significantly varying impact, depending on school and staff population, as well as demonstrated student need. This will limit local boards of education and the administrators they hire in prioritizing curriculum and staffing positions as they are forced to fund mandates that may not coincide with the demonstrated desires of the community, or needs of the student population. There is no action without reaction. The requirement to fund this mandate will undoubtedly result in less funding being available elsewhere.

Mandates such as this serve to erode the influence and accountability of locally elected boards of education. Therefore, I suggest that the act be worded to rescind the requirement completely rather than delay its implementation.

Thomas E. Marsh
First Selectman, Chester